

Minute of Meeting Communities and Housing Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 07 March 2023	13:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present: Councillor Jacqueline Cameron, Councillor Gillian Graham, Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes, Councillor Robert Innes, Councillor Alec Leishman, Councillor Mags MacLaren, Councillor Colin McCulloch, Councillor Janis McDonald, Councillor Cathy McEwan, Councillor Jamie McGuire, Councillor Marie McGurk, Councillor Iain McMillan, Councillor John McNaughtan, Councillor Emma Rodden

Chair

Councillor McGurk, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

M Crearie, Director of Communities & Housing; L McIntyre, Head of Policy & Commissioning and J Castle, Senior Communications Officer (both Chief Executives); C Dalrymple, Head of Facilities & Property Management (Environment & Infrastructure); N Drummond, Lead Officer (Environmental Co-ordination), L Feeley, Housing Asset & Investment Manager, C Hunter, Environmental Health Public Health Manager, C Robertson, Warden Services Manager and R Walkinshaw, Housing Regeneration & Development Manager (all Communities & Housing Services); and G Dickie, Partnering & Commissioning Manager, J Kilpatrick, Finance Business Partner, D Pole, End User Technician, R Devine and E Gray both Senior Committee Services Officers and D Cunningham, Assistant Committee Services Officer (all Finance & Resources).

Webcasting of Meeting

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Convener intimated that this meeting of the Board would be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast on the Council's internet site.

Apology

Councillor Carolann Davidson.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1 Police and Fire & Rescue Services Scrutiny Sub-committee

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Sub-committee held on 17 January 2023. The Minute forms the Appendix to this document.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 General Services Revenue, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Budget Monitoring

There was submitted a General Services Revenue, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Budget Monitoring report by the Director of Finance & Resources for the period 1 April 2022 to 6 January 2023.

The report stated that the projected outturn as at 31 March 2023 for all services reporting to this Policy Board was an overspend position of £0.025 million. The projected capital outturn for projects reporting to this Policy Board was a breakeven position against the revised budget for the year. Summaries were provided over the relevant services in the tables within the report, together with further analysis. In addition, the report indicated that revenue expenditure budget adjustments totalling £1.056 million and capital budget adjustments of £2.5 million, had been processed since consideration of the previous report at the meeting of the Policy Board held on 17 January 2023. Details of the adjustments were outlined within the report.

DECIDED:

(a) That the projected Revenue outturn position, detailed in table 1 of the report, be noted;

(b) That the projected Capital outturn position, detailed in table 2 of the report, be noted; and

(c) That the budget adjustments, detailed in sections 4 and 6 of the report, be noted.

3 Building Communities, Greenspaces, Parks & Play Areas and Villages Investment Fund Update

There was submitted a report by the Director of Communities & Housing Services relative to the Greenspaces, Parks & Play Areas and Villages Investment Fund.

The report indicated that the key objective in allocating funding was to work with, and support, community groups to identify and deliver improvement projects in their local communities, improve their local greenspaces, including parks and play areas, and

strengthen the identity, heritage, uniqueness and character of village life. An update was provided on progress made in terms of supporting community projects, detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, projects approved in terms of delegated authority by the Director of Communities & Housing Services during the previous three-month period together with work undertaken to support active and engaged communities. Taking account of the projects approved in terms of delegated authority during the previous three-month period and all other projects awarded funding to date, £30,000 was currently unallocated in the Villages Investment Fund and £55,000 in the Green Spaces Fund.

The report also provided updates in relation to the progress of Team Up to Clean Up and the recently launched Environmental Taskforce, key performance indicators, relationships with businesses and housing associations, and detailed the impacts the Taskforce was having in Renfrewshire to support active and engaged communities. The report intimated that further umbrella projects to be launched imminently included the Sustainable Food Premises Scheme, in partnership with Sweco. In addition, the report highlighted that Team Up to Clean Up's Green Dog Walking Scheme and the Secondary School Bin Wrap project were under construction with these projects anticipated to be delivered between April and September 2023.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the work currently being undertaken to support communities as they developed and delivered projects to be funded using the Greenspaces, Parks & Play Areas and Villages Investment Fund be noted;
- (b) That the impact of the funding and the benefits to the wider communities delivered by the projects, as set out in section 4 of the report, be noted;
- (c) That the work currently being undertaken by the Environmental Taskforce to support communities in the efficient removal and investigation of flytipping be noted;
- (d) That the work of the Taskforce in creating partnerships with Housing Associations, and the education of private landowners be noted; and
- (e) That the upcoming Team Up to Clean Up projects designed to address wide reaching, common community concerns including dog fouling, excess of plastic waste and school lunchtime litter be noted.

4 Private Rented Sector - Advocacy and Enforcement Initiative Update

Under reference to item 2 of the Minute of the meeting of Renfrewshire Council held on 4 March 2021 there was submitted a report by the Director of Communities & Housing Services relative to progress made in respect of the Advocacy and Enforcement Initiative.

The report advised that funding of £200,000 had been approved at the meeting of Renfrewshire Council held on 4 March 2021 in recognition of the challenges experienced by tenants as temporary legal protections, that had operated during the COVID19 pandemic, were transitioned away with the aim of improving access to support, housing options advice and advocacy for tenants, and where appropriate supporting the use of enforcement powers in the private rented sector. Three temporary posts had been established within Homeless Services, the Housing

Support team and Environmental Health - Enforcement, with close links being established across the three services to create an integrated support approach for tenants in the private rented sector. Details of the activities undertaken by the three postholders since their appointment were provided together with the perceived value of the initiative, feedback received from tenants, landlords and agents was also outlined. The report intimated that the current funding allocation would enable the project to continue until January 2024 and it was stated that a further update on activity and an evaluation of the initiative would be submitted to a future meeting of this Policy Board prior to that date.

DECIDED: That progress with the Advocacy and Enforcement Initiative be noted and that it be agreed that a further update be provided to a future meeting of this Policy Board.

5 Renfrewshire Common Housing Allocation Policy – Council Allocation Targets for 2023/24

Under reference to item 5 of the Minute of the meeting of the former Communities, Housing & Planning Policy Board held on 15 January 2019 there was submitted a report by the Director of Communities & Housing Services relative to the Renfrewshire Common Housing Allocation Policy.

The report advised that the Renfrewshire Common Housing Allocation Policy had been implemented by the Council on 1 May 2019 with allocation targets set and reviewed annually by each landlord. The proposed Council allocation targets for 2023/24 in respect of the proportion of lets to each of the five groups in which applicants were placed according to their circumstances were detailed in section 4 of the report.

It was agreed that detailed information relative to the reasons for failing to meet the target for proportion of lets for the statutory homeless grouping in the first six months of 2022/23 would be issued to all members of the Policy Board.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Council's allocation targets for 2023/24, as set out in section 4 of the report, be approved; and

(b) That detailed information relative to the reasons for failing to meet the target for proportion of lets for the statutory homeless grouping in the first six months of 2022/23 be issued to all members of the Policy Board .

6 Private Sector Housing Grant – proposed change to Scheme of Assistance in Regeneration Areas

There was submitted a report by the Director of Communities & Housing Services relative to the proposed amendment of existing levels of financial assistance available through the Private Sector Housing Grant for participating owners who lived in properties that were included in approved Housing Regeneration Areas to provide an enhanced rate of assistance for resident owners.

The report made reference to the Council's housing-led regeneration and renewal programme, which brought forward up to £100 million of additional investment over the next ten-year period, to deliver high quality energy-efficient homes and environmental improvements. The report highlighted that the eight areas within the programme contained 1,648 properties of which, at the start of the programme, 1,147 were in Council ownership and 501 were privately owned and that working with owners and providing options to enable them to either participate in improvements or to sell their properties to the Council was crucial to its delivery. Details of proposals for properties and the tenure of properties involved were outlined together with options available for owners in terms of sale of the property, their participation in the programme of refurbishment works, assistance with costs and repayment arrangements. Due to the comprehensive nature of the whole house retrofit approach, base costs for owners were anticipated to be relatively high in comparison with previous mixed tenure investment programmes. The report proposed that given the relatively high costs of the improvement works and the desirability of securing a high level of participation to secure the area transformation proposed, the Scheme of Assistance for properties in the Housing Regeneration Areas, be revised to 25% for non-resident owners, 50% for resident owners and 75% for resident owners on benefits.

DECIDED: That it be agreed that the Council's Scheme of Assistance be altered only in respect of Housing Regeneration Areas included in the Housing-led Regeneration Programme to increase the level of Private Sector Housing Grant for eligible properties in mixed tenure blocks from 25% for non-resident owners, 35% for resident owners and 50% for resident owners on benefits, to an enhanced level in which it paid 25% for non-resident owners, 50% for resident owners and 75% for resident owners on benefits.

Valedictory

The Convener advised that this was the last meeting of the Policy Board that Mary Crearie, Director of Housing & Community Services would attend before her retirement and took the opportunity to wish her all the best for the future and to thank her for service to the Council, making reference to the help, support and advice she had provided and her many achievements. Other elected members took the opportunity to echo the sentiments expressed by the Convener.